

**OBITUARY OF LATE MRS CLEO THEODORA PAPATHANASOPOULOS  
(NEE VASSAMOPOULOS)**

Reverends,

Last time I spoke to my godmother, these were her words :

"Koumbare, thank the Lord I have wonderful children".

Let us take a few brief moments and look back as to why this wonderful person, Cleo Theodora Poulos, was able to thank the Lord for having wonderful children.

Born in Johannesburg, as a young girl she went back to Volos, together with her parents, Evangelos and Dimitra Vassamopoulos and her two sisters, Ariti and Mary.

She finished her schooling in Greece and they then returned to Johannesburg as a family.

In 1940 she married the late Arthur Papathanasopoulos and newly married they set up home in Benoni, a town which they never left. A town which made them synonymous with the citizens of the town and particularly the Hellenic Community of Benoni.

It is known that Arthur Poulos went on to become a renowned man in the baking industry and that he guided the Hellenic Community of Benoni from inception through to what it is today. The building of this church Saint Athanasios and the facilities namely, the school and the hall.

They were blessed with three sons, Strati, married to Theresa with four children and two grand children. Angelo, married to Maro with two sons, Arthur and George. And George, married to Panagiota with two children, Nicolaki and Cleo, who has her grandmother's name.

Three sons, who went on in life and became successful businessmen and professionals. Their married lives blessed Cleo with 8 grandchildren and 2 great grandchildren. What a wonderful Godly blessing.

The background of the family life was such that it showed itself in the lives of the children, three brothers who have remained inseparable and always respecting and loving one another.

Cleo, likewise with her two sisters were inseparable - Ariti and Mary. In Greece they were always together and approximately two years ago they managed to visit Volos, their family roots for old times sake. Ariti, the older sister passed away soon afterwards and now Mary is the only surviving sister.

*for me Treopa*

Loving brothers and family, loving sisters – This portrays the nature and spirit of Cleo.

She was truly a loving and supporting wife, a caring and guiding mother and loving grandmother and great grandmother, as only grandmothers can be with their grandchildren.

Above all, a human being with all whom she had contact with. At all times portraying humility of the highest standard.

*91/2 years Marriage*

She was widowed in April 1994 when her husband Arthur passed away. She retained her elegance and continued to be herself in spite of her sad loss. It is here that the children rallied around their mother and gave her the satisfaction and contentment that any parent would desire of his or her children.

To the boys, Strati, Angelo, George and your wives, may the good Lord keep you well for the wonderful manner in which you looked after your mother. I assure you that she really counted her blessings.

A lady who stood out in all she did. In everything she did there was a natural elegance about her. She did not need special schooling to present herself as a lady.

A lady who had undertaken many tasks in her lifetime and excelled everytime.

At functions, large cocktails and dances she always stood out as thé lady. She never put herself above others. She was always full of praise for her fellow-being and wherever possible she would be of assistance.

Never ever did she speak ill of any person.

Her house gatherings, parties, teas, were second to none ordained by her elegance.

Arthur Poulos, successful in his business and as Chairman of the Hellenic Community of Benoni, it is certain achieved these heights because of the wonderful and unstinting support that he enjoyed from his wife, Cleo and naturally his children.

When the church was to be built, Arthur Poulos was the main donor. Cleo set about heading the Ladies Committee of the Community and held many functions in order to raise funds for the building of the church.

It is certain that we all remember that she introduced the first Hellenic Christmas parties, soon to be followed by the other Hellenic Communities.

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I, together with a number of others were very fortunate to have her as our godmother.

She was my godmother, my koumbara at my wedding and they went on to baptize my eldest son John.

As a family we felt very honoured and privileged to have had these wonderful people as our godparents and koumbari. This relationship has been retained and augmented with the continued association that we have with the children.

Many the happy memory in Greece for many years, could be anything 15 to 20 years, that we used to meet for a month and holiday together at Vouliagmeni in Greece. Always being made a fuss of by Cleo and her two sisters. Indeed happy days and happy memories. She always treated Olga and I as her children.

Cleo leaves us knowing that she was a content person. A person who practiced her religion and followed the Lord in her life.

In latter years throughout her illnesses, she retained her beautiful elegance and never complained. In spite of her illness, she always made a point of wanting to know about the well being of all her friends and relatives.

Cleo will undoubtedly rest in peace. There is no doubt that our Lord has already embraced her and taken her to where she belongs in heaven.

I truly feel that we will all miss her, but together we pray and ask our Lord to bless her soul.

Forever, your memory.

Peter.

Εγκατέλειψεν  
Αιωνίην Ημέραν

P STATHOULIS

10<sup>th</sup> June 2004.